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Art Needlework.

HINTS ON EMBROIDERY.

I.

WITH regard to the actual methods employed in the various kinds of embroidery now in vogue, there has been little, if any, radical change since—not so very many years back—we awoke to the fact that much patient labor was being wasted on the kind of embroidery known as Berlin wool work, the results of which were not only inartistic, but also wholly disproportioned to the amount of time and effort spent upon it.

Berlin wool work was superseded by crewel work, which, if properly executed, admits of far more artistic treatment; but, unfortunately, its fundamental principles were seldom really mastered, simple as they are, and the amount of inartistic work produced by incompetent hands soon brought it into disrepute. Crewel stitch proper, however, is still greatly used, under such other names as outlining stitch and stem stitch, for various kinds of embroidery. Although this stitch is doubtless familiar to the average reader, the accompanying illustration will make my meaning clear to all. The extreme usefulness of this stitch is owing to its great adaptability. By varying the length of the stitch—which consists, as will be seen, of a long stitch forward and a short stitch back—straight lines, gently undulating lines, and the sharpest curves can, with equal ease, be executed after a very little practice. A close straight edge, or, by bringing the needle out at a slight angle, a serrated edge, of such frequent occurrence in leaf forms, can also be obtained with it. For a very open edge the angle is to be increased. It should be observed that, in outlining leaves, on reaching the top the action of the needle is to be reversed, as shown in the illustration, to give the natural appearance of the leaf.

A variety of this useful stitch is the twisted chain, commonly known as rope stitch, which, as shown, is formed by inserting the point of the needle at the side of the chain stitch instead of through the centre, as in working ordinary chain stitch. This method gives a very rich, raised appearance to the work, and is well adapted to working with rope silk on rich materials—such as velvet, plush, silk, satin or fine cloth.

Stem stitch is frequently used for filling in solidly, as are also feather stitch and satin stitch, both of which I shall speak of later on. To fill in with stem stitch, exactly the same method as that followed in outlining is pursued—that is to say, each row is worked, as in this, closely within the last, care being taken to bring out the needle half way between the stitches in the previous row, in order that the work may not present a stiff or formal appearance. It should be observed that, for large spaces, where the curves are slight, a long, loose stitch (which, however, must be very evenly worked) may be employed with advantage, thereby saving time, as well as obtaining a better effect than could be had by using very close stitches.

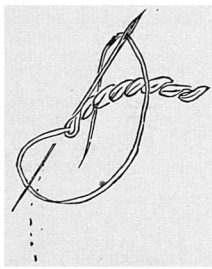
One great advantage in modern art embroidery is the freedom permitted to individual taste, both in regard to color and style, as well as in regard to the variety of stitches that may be employed in the same design. For instance, a bold conventional or semi-conventional design may be wrought with exquisite effect by first outlining it with rope stitch, and instead of solid embroidery, filling in with any number of point lace stitches. In this kind of work, wherever a circle occurs a brass ring of the same size, over which rope silk has been crocheted, is to be placed. This, when sewn down to the work, has a rich, raised effect, and looks as if done very evenly in buttonhole stitch.

In these days, when everything must be done in a hurry, there are many who, perhaps, have neither the time, skill nor patience for the finer and more elaborate kinds of art embroidery. To such I commend a style now much in vogue, and which admits of great variety and lends itself to very artistic effects, besides being applicable to many different purposes—I mean a combination of tinting and embroidery. The colors to be used are generally tapestry dyes, unless the work be executed on a dark ground, in which case oil paints, thinned with turpentine, may be employed. The materials generally used for this style of work are, first, cream-colored Bolton sheeting of good quality; after which come moleskin, tapestry canvas, either silk or woollen, thin Oriental silks, bolting cloth and fine-linen. The Bolton sheeting and tapestry canvas are used for portières, screens, bed-spreads, carriage rugs, sofa cushions, and all such articles as call for a heavy texture. A suitable design for tinting would be a handsome scroll pattern, or flowers, treated in conventional or realistic fashion, it matters not which. The cream-colored ground allows of any coloring desired. The tinting is, of course, all laid in before the needle is taken in hand.

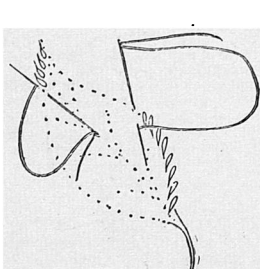
When the tinting is laid on, the next consideration is the outline, every part of which, including all veins of leaves, tendrils, flower centres, and, in fact, everything that accentuates the design, must be embroidered. For mere outline, there are several kinds of stitches that can be used, such as stem stitch, rope stitch, split stitch, chain stitch, or couching. The latter can be done in different ways. For instance, either one or more strands of silk, crewels or linen floss can be sewn down at regular intervals either with fine silk to match or with a contrasting color. Sometimes the strands are

held rather loosely against the outline, so as to puff them up a little between the threads that hold them down. Gold, silver or tinsel cord can also be used, or, on articles worked on linen for table use, linen lay cord is very appropriate. This looks best fastened down with colored wash silks in buttonhole stitch, a space about one eighth of an inch being left between each stitch. Should it be desirable to enrich the design still further, a remarkably good effect is produced by working the edges of the flowers and leaves with long and short stitch in colors to match the tinting, afterward outlining with gold, silver or colored silk couched down as described. Very rich looking sofa pillows are made of Bolton sheeting treated in this way and mounted on plush or velvet. Thin silks and bolting cloth are beautiful, tinted and outlined. These can be used for easel scarfs, tidies, sachets and innumerable other fancy articles for which such materials are suited.

The large flowering clematis design given in one of the Supplement sheets this month would work out excellently tinted and outlined in the manner I have described. The material used for the sofa cushion may be cream-colored Bolton sheeting. The color for tinting, of course, is optional, but only one tone should be used throughout, although two or three shades may be employed. Do not blend the shades, but paint them on in flat tones, say, half the flowers—that is, the foreshortened part—dark and the other half lighter. The flower that is behind the other in the centre may be of a medium shade throughout. Now, with rope silk in two or three shades, to match the tinting, work over every line in the design with stem stitches. The flower centres must be worked



ROPE STITCH.



STEM STITCH.

solidly in the same stitch. Fine Japanese gold cord, laid down with fine silk matching it as closely as possible in color, would also have an excellent effect if used instead of the rope silk. The work when finished should be mounted on some rich material that harmonizes or contrasts well with the work. There are other effective modes of treatment for this excellent design, but of these I will speak in my next chapter, since the editor has promised a border with the same flower and in the same style, which will add greatly to the usefulness of the design for other purposes, which I shall suggest.

EMMA HAYWOOD.

HINTS FOR HOME DECORATION.

BULGARIAN EMBROIDERIES are much used for pillow-covers, the two embroidered ends being sewed together. Rosettes are much used for trimming the corners of pillows, and they are made of a strip of material two inches wide and one yard long. This is doubled, gathered at the edge, drawn up closely, and forced into an opening at the corner, which is only about three quarters of an inch in size.

SOFA PILLOWS in many new shapes are seen in the shops. One—of deep red china silk—is made in imitation of a tomato. After the sections have been joined and the pillow has been filled with down, all is drawn together in the centre, after the manner of the old-fashioned tomato pin-cushions. Another similar pillow is made of red gingham, and a tiny double ruffle is inserted at the place of joining all around.

THE popularity of chintzes and cretonnes for wall coverings is as great as ever, the same material being used in combination with plain stuffs for upholstering the furniture also. Where the wall is covered with gay-flowered goods, the curtains should be of plain cretonne to harmonize, and the plain material might also be used with good effect either for frieze or dado. Much latitude is allowed in wall decoration, and great originality is often displayed in the choice of material, which may be blue denim, or white canvas, or silk or chintz. Even the common gray crash has been used for panels, upon which flowers in shades of red have been painted. Fr. Beck & Co. do a large business in chintz wall papers made to match coverings and hangings.

ALTHOUGH the fancy for chintz papers introduced by that firm is so great, plain cartridge papers have by no means been discarded, and are preferred by many people as a more suitable background for pictures and wall ornaments.

"SWISS" for sash and over-curtains is made this season in several new figures and colorings. The designs are much larger, and consist of circles, diamonds and squares, as well as the familiar coin spots. They come in old red, pale blue, yellow and plain white, and are 43 cents a yard for fifty-inch width goods. Curtains of this material look well if made to hang from a small brass rod placed about twenty-three inches from the top of the window. The space above should have a full valance five eighths of a yard deep (or much narrower if liked, in which case the curtains must be longer) of the same goods, and the effect will be very pleasing. If the lower curtains are attached to the rod with very small rings they may be easily adjusted, and they are very useful for screens as well.

A DRAWING-ROOM recently decorated has a high dado in old pink, papered up nearly five feet. Above this the paper is of a cream ground, with large pink magnolias with their delicate green leaves. The ceiling is of pink, with a yellow tone, and the mouldings are of dead gold. Where a ceiling is high the effect of this deep dado is very good.

Treatment of Designs.

"THE AFTERGLOW." (COLOR PLATE NO. 1.)

IN order to study to advantage this dashing study by Mr. Rehn, before beginning to copy it place it in a good light and about six feet away; then take a telescopic view of it through the hand. We thus get something of the magical influence, the rich coloring, peculiar to the moment.

We are to work in oils: A vague line drawn about two fifths from the lower edge of the canvas, to divide sky and sea, a few accurate strokes to indicate the several boats, and we are ready for color! Nothing is more beautiful, and safer for the general glow, than Indian yellow. This alone may be carried rather thinly over the entire sky and also over the water, as far as any yellow light is noticeable. In the brightest part of the sky, pale and deep cadmiums may now be painted in with heavy, emphatic strokes; they will not work up the Indian yellow to any great extent. They must not stop abruptly; they may be carried out with less and less force as far as the undertint appears very light. Where thin patches of red show themselves, Indian red may be brightened sufficiently with scarlet vermilion and touched on sparingly. The slightest possible amount of this tint may be distributed with a broad, flat bristle brush, held very slantingly, wherever the sky is reddish. The next deeper tints may be put on in the same manner with Roman ochre and the Siennas. For the greenish tints in sky and water use terre verte and a little Antwerp blue. Bone brown and blue black may be used for the very dark tints which occur to some extent in the sky and are conspicuous in the water, especially in the deep shadows and in the oscillating reflections. These two colors, together with burnt Sienna, will be wanted for the dark warm tints seen in portions of the foreground. For the red lights on the figures and the row-boats, the Indian yellow and vermilion may be thinly applied. Finally, for the strongest lights upon the sky and water, particularly those that seem to be flecked in the sky, use lemon yellow. If the whole can be done before the colors are allowed to dry, the effect will be better. Where any surface is left unfinished, let it be rather soft and broken, that no line of demarcation may be apparent after resuming. Much will depend upon the copyist's skill in handling; he must be equal to producing upon canvas an actual texture which will correspond to that suggested by the copy.

ARUM LILIES AND AMARYLLISES. (COLOR PLATE NO. 2.)

TO work up to the high degree of finish shown in this handsome picture, by Miss Bertha Maguire, will be difficult for the average student who may attempt to copy it in water-colors, in which the original was executed. As it would be equally effective in oils and much less tedious of accomplishment, our directions for treatment will be given mainly with the latter medium in view.

Choose a canvas of good quality, with some tooth to it; or, if preferred, take a panel of basswood properly prepared—that is, primed with a coat of paint. These wood panels are greatly in favor with many good professional artists for every kind of subject, their chief advantage being their durability. Make a careful outline sketch of the whole subject, first, in charcoal, so that you can easily correct errors; then, when corrected, you can secure the outline in thin color—say raw umber thinned with turpentine—with a sable brush. This is not absolutely necessary, but it is, perhaps, desirable for those not very skillful in drawing.

Begin painting by laying in the background with a mixture of raw umber, cobalt and white, increasing the quantity of white, and adding a touch of Indian red in the lower part. For the vase and table-cloth set your palette with raw umber, rose madder, ivory black, cobalt blue and yellow ochre. For the lighter shadows in the white flowers mix yellow ochre, cobalt blue and white. For the darker parts substitute raw umber for the yellow ochre. The green shadow underneath the flower is obtained by mixing pale lemon yellow with ivory black, using the yellow almost pure in parts. The stamens need the brilliancy of light cadmium, with a little of the greenish shadow color, and a high light of pure lemon yellow. Load on the white lights with silver or flake white, to which enough yellow ochre has been added to take off the crudeness but not to color it. For the Amaryllis lilies a little of the shadow color used for the white flowers will serve for the gray tints. For the lightest pink shade mix white with scarlet vermilion. It will be found a good plan to paint the broad shadows with the gray tones first, and while they are still wet work into them a little scarlet vermilion. The half tones can be rendered by glazing over the local color with a little rose madder. It is quite possible to finish up a flower in one painting, or to so nearly finish it that it will only require a little sharpening up with a few crisp touches. For the foliage use emerald green, yellow ochre and white shaded with raw Sienna, to which add a suspicion of Antwerp blue. Zinober greens can be substituted if preferred, toned with raw Sienna and black. The same green appears in the heart of the flowers and on the lighter berberis leaves, which are to be edged with some of the reds and the gray on your palette. For the brown leaves yellow madder shaded with raw Sienna and burnt umber will give the desired effect.

For water-colors a similar palette may be set, omitting, of course, the admixture of white. Seeing, however, that the texture of the Arum lily is exceedingly opaque, a little Chinese white might be used with advantage on the high lights.

THE ELEMENTS. (2)—"AIR."

THIS panel can be treated in exactly the same manner as was suggested for "Earth"—the first of the set—given last January; only it would be well to vary the color of the scarves, while keeping to white for the robe throughout the series.

For those who do not care to paint the design it may be utilized for needlework with excellent results, because the effect is gained almost entirely by means of clear, spirited outlines. Any smooth material may be used, according to the purpose for which the work is to be employed. The series of four figures placed side by side, with a small space between, would make a capital splash-back for a wash-stand. For greater accuracy in the features and hands it would be well to use split stitch, while for the general outlines and folds of the dress stem stitch is best. A darned background would bring the figure into greater relief. For richer effects the figures may be carried out entirely in tapestry stitch.

PLATE BORDERS.

No. 1: Gold raised lines with pink, blue or green rosettes. The background may be tinted or not. If tinted, the pattern may be carried out all in gold. No. 2: May be treated in the same way. No. 3: Lines or crackle in gold or silver over color or over the white china; the leaves in any color to suit the interior decoration. No. 4: Tinted background leaves in silver or gold. No. 5: Leaves in green or other color; dots of gold or silver. No. 6: Leaves one-half gold, one-half silver or platinum, which does not burn away as silver does on a tinted or white ground. No. 7: Blue ground, gold or silver cobwebs, with white flowers taken out, or white background, silver or gold cobwebs